

Online Learning: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

Summarizes 15 years of experience with the LEEP online scheduling option in the Graduate School of Library & Information Science at the University of Illinois. The program, a response to the need for greater access, is described, including success measures. Eight key features, each arising from perceived challenges, are analyzed to explain the experiences.

Outline

- ~ Graduate School of Library and Information Science
- ~ LEEP as a way to ensure greater access
- ~ Key features of LEEP



Graduate School of Library & Information Science



Students, GAs

GSLIS programs

- ~ Master of Science
- ~ PhD
- ~ Cert. of Advanced Study
- ~ BS informatics
- ~ Community Credit
- ~ 750 students



Options

- ~ Academic library
- ~ K12 school media
- ~ Community college library
- ~ Digital libraries
- ~ Data curation
- ~ Special collections
- ~ Community informatics
- ~ Bioinformatics

The need: Access

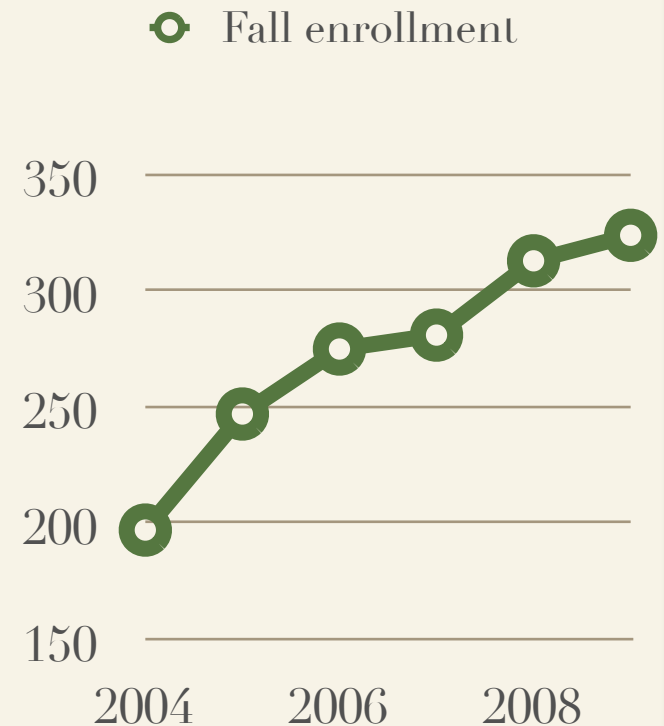
- ~ Distance
- ~ Professional duties
- ~ Family
- ~ Travel
- ~ Health issues



LEEP, est. 1996

Sections

- ~ 96-97: 3 Fa, 3 Sp, 2 Su
- ~ 09-10: 38 Fa, 21 Sp, 41 Su





LEAP Weekend

Friday, June 25, 2010



- ~ Consortium of 14 schools
- ~ Since 2004, over 465 courses
- ~ Partner with professional organizations
- ~ Continuing professional development

Success measures

- ~ High completion rate
- ~ Recognition by employers
- ~ Continued satisfaction & participation by students, faculty, alumni, community members
- ~ Continued faculty & technological development

Beyond access: Key features

1. one program

2. Organic development: Instructors

Re-think pedagogy =>

- ~ More diverse pool of people & situations
- ~ Teaching while traveling
- ~ Learning pedagogy

3. Diversity as a resource

Accommodating difference =>

- ~ Communities: Barrio of East LA, Tlingit community in Alaska
- ~ Backgrounds of students
- ~ Professional settings

4. Connection to experience

Research v practice =>

- ~ Professions increasingly defined in terms of information & communication technologies
- ~ Building on student experiences

5. Community of practice

Reduced personal connection =>

- ~ On campus events
- ~ Learning community
- ~ Connection to
 - ~ professionals
 - ~ community
 - ~ alumni
 - ~ other courses



6. Living technology

Learning & re-learning technologies =>

- ~ Strong support for faculty & students
- ~ Session archive
- ~ Audio/video displays
- ~ Online interaction, e.g., whiteboard
- ~ Tools support all courses, on campus and online

7. Experimentation

a scientific attitude towards their work and toward life...an attitude of eager, alert observations, a constant questioning of old procedure in the light of new observations; and use of the world as well as of books and source materials; an experimental open-mindedness; and an effort to keep as reliable records as the situation permits in order to base the future upon actual knowledge of the experiences of the past –Lucy Sprague Mitchell

8. Research, reflection

Extra planning, adaptation =>

- ~ LEEP retreats
- ~ ALISE workshops
- ~ Articles, books, dissertations

Why LEEP works

1. One program
2. Organic development
3. Diversity as a resource
4. Connection to experience
5. Community of practice
6. Living technology
7. Experimentation
8. Research & reflection

